

Policy bills stalling in legislature

By Kristena Hansen
Associated Press

SALEM (AP) — With the Oregon Legislature about to enter its last week, minority Republicans are using a host of tactics in the state Senate to try to stall some of the last big policy bills that are being pushed by the majority Democrats.

The Democrats — who have a majority in both chambers — have been able to pass some of their priority bills, including one that would raise the minimum wage.

But the Republicans argue the Democrats loaded up the short session — which began on February 1 and ends on March 6 — with too many big policy items, and GOP lawmakers have been using some maneuvers that are unusual for the Oregon Legislature to slow things down.

Bills awaiting action in the Senate include proposals on renewable energy and housing affordability, as well as state budget adjustments to cover issues such as a total of roughly \$8 million for costs related to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge occupation and last year's Umpqua Community College mass shooting.

The partisan clash and dwindling willingness for compromise became most visible on Wednesday when Senate Republicans were a no-show for the 5 p.m. floor session. Without a quorum, Senate President Peter Courtney adjourned the meeting, which was already backlogged with several bills — none of which controversial — that were rescheduled from previous days as a direct result of the GOP's stalling techniques.

"I guess they're not coming," Courtney said. "I want to thank you for being willing to do the work. This does not make me happy. This makes me sad."

Republicans in both chambers enforced a constitutional rule at the start of the session that requires

each bill to be read aloud, in their entirety, before a vote — a process that takes several hours for more lengthy bills. House Republicans dropped that strategy after the passage of the minimum wage bill last week, which is headed to Gov. Kate Brown's desk for signing, but Senate Republicans have dug in their heels.

One of the last big issues of the session is a controversial bill to phase out coal power in Oregon and double the state's renewable energy standards, a negotiated deal between environmentalists and the state's two largest utilities as a compromise to more aggressive energy proposals for the November ballot.

House Bill 4036 was passed by the House last week. But Senate Republicans had been using techniques to try to keep it from hitting the Senate floor for a final vote. The Republicans are raising concerns about unknown costs to ratepayers and benefits to the environment, and argue a 35-day session is not the right time for such a massive overhaul to Oregon's energy policy.

Democrats say the bill is a far better alternative to the more aggressive ballot proposals that would likely pass muster with the Oregon electorate. They tried to get around the GOP's delaying

tactics by tacking on most of the lengthy language of HB 4036 onto a smaller bill, Senate Bill 1547, which simply clarified the definition of public utility and had already passed the Senate.

The drastically changed SB 1547 passed out of a House committee Thursday evening, and Republicans complained about the Democrats using their tactics against those of the GOP.

"I guess they're not coming. I want to thank you for being willing to do the work. This does not make me happy. This makes me sad."

— Peter Courtney

"Tonight, we witnessed another backroom deal passing out of committee with only one hour's notice," Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli said in a statement Thursday. "This is the third iteration of a sweeping energy bill, none of which have been properly vetted — no public hearings were held and no proper fiscal analysis was ever done."

The coal bill now heads to the House, then to the Senate for final vote without a lengthy delay.

Man wanted in a double-killing arrested

SALEM (AP) — A man wanted in the killing of his two young housemates in Jefferson County has been arrested in Salem.

Police say 20-year-old Mitchell Julio Morris, of Crooked River Ranch, was taken into custody late Saturday morning when a Salem officer spotted a pickup truck he was in, called for backup and followed him to a parking lot.

Authorities had been looking for him since Friday night, when they received a report of gunshots at a home on Southwest Sand Ridge Road in Crooked River Ranch. Police found an 18-year-old man, Bailee Ray Southwick, and a 21-year-old woman, Mackenzie Lyman, dead.

Oregon State Police said authorities conducted an extensive search of the area as well as throughout Central Oregon and the Willamette Valley area before he was located in Salem. Another male who was in the truck was cooperating with police and had not been arrested.

Bill to expand dredging moratorium dies

MEDFORD (AP) — An Oregon lawmaker says his bill to extend and expand a ban on suction-dredge mining has died because of delay tactics by mining interests.

The *Mail Tribune* reports that Sen. Alan Bates, D-Medford, says he has pulled the bill after attempts to add amendments to gain bipartisan support didn't work.

Bates' bill would have broadened the moratorium that is in place on wild salmon streams, including most of the Rogue River Basin.

Mining interest lobbyist Rich Angstrom says the bill was too complex for the Legislature's short, one-month session.

The legislature passed a bill in 2013 that placed restrictions on dredging. It was designed to end at the end of 2015, giving lawmakers time to devise permanent rules. They never did.

Bates says he will sponsor a similar bill for the Oregon Legislature's 2017 session.



LAREDO

Award-Winning Home Builder & Renovator

541-549-1575 • LaredoConstruction.com

Maintenance • Repairs • Insurance Work CCB#194489

A Partnership Beyond Your Expectations



Western Title & Escrow

Stop by and visit with Tiana Van Landuyt & Shelley Marsh.
220 S. Pine St., Ste. 102 | 541-548-9180

CUSTOM HOMES • RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PROJECTS
Serving the Sisters Area Since 1976

J.P. Pierce
GENERAL CONTRACTING LLC

CCB# 16891
CCB# 159020

541-549-9764 • jpierce@bendbroadband.com

BLACK BUTTE RANCH REAL ESTATE
HOWELLS REALTY GROUP
EXCLUSIVE ONSITE REALTOR FOR THE RANCH

GOLF COURSE CONDO 92
\$769,000 • mls #201600959



On the Big Meadow Golf Course!

NEW LISTING!

GOLF HOME 113
\$825,000 • mls #201507696



Big Meadow Golf Course home!

Come see us daily at The Ranch, 9 to 5
Our office is adjacent to the new Lodge Pool Complex

Don Bowler, President and Broker ~ 971-244-3012
Gary Yoder, Managing Principal Broker ~ 541-420-6708
Dick Howells, Principal Broker ~ 541-408-6818
Phil Arends, Principal Broker ~ 541-420-9997
Joe Dye, Broker ~ 541-595-2604 | Carol Dye, Broker ~ 541-480-0923
Steve Post, Broker ~ 541-480-5415

541-595-3838 The Ranch • 541-549-5555 in Sisters
see all our listings at blackbutte.com

RE/MAX
Out West Realty
— Serving all of Central Oregon —

Sandy Goodsell
"It's not just my name, it's a promise!"



Principal Broker
ABR, CDPE, CIAS, GRI, SRES
541-480-0183

www.sandygoodsell.com
Licensed Broker in the State of Oregon